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agreeable? The use of our present large exhibitions has been much debated by artists themselves.

It is quite natural that artists who have made a reputation do not care much for exhibitions, but they will always be the battlefields of young talents, and the young, after all, are the mainspring of art; they assure the future, without which the past would soon die out, and even if their insignificant pictures disappear entirely in the chaos of modern large exhibitions, they nevertheless collect priceless experience in every competition.

One thing the Chicago Exhibition has made clear to me: What modern art can do at this day. It can do much. That is the first impression conveyed to the looker on in the galleries of the Art Palace. With increasing astonishment one feels like acknowledging that it can do all, even the impossible.

At every step some masterpiece of the first order in regard to technical accomplishments demands a nod of approval, and a hundred other canvasses challenge us to stop and confess, "How marvelously well it is all done!" And this is the average of artistic development. Among four thousand pictures there are scarcely — and I especially sought for them — two hundred pictures which were technically bad.

Now one should think that an exhibition possessing such virtues would make an excellent final impression. But it did not. The majority of pictures leave an indifferent, even foolish impression.

The long and short of it is: Modern painting has no ideal.

The first impression created by the American art exhibit, taken separately, was also a favorable one, as, for various reasons, it compared well with the others. Good display of technique and many a large canvas of bright, fashionable coloring were conspicuous. But on closer examination these color charms ceded to a hopelessly grey monotony of ideas. The pictures were either landscapes, marines, still life, portraits (soon car conductors will have life-size family portraits in their tenement flats!) and figure studies (not pictures). It was rather a discouraging experience for believers in American art. An over-abundance of imagination does not seem likely to inflict brain fever on American artists. There was not one picture which really revealed composition or thought like the pictures of Laurens, Chavannes or Martin, for instance, and of those that express sentiment, less than a dozen could be mentioned. Object painting, nothing but object painting!

## A PLEA FOR LIBERAL ART EDUCATION.

A Paper Read by J. W. Stimson before the Educational Congress, World's Fair Auxiliary.

That this epoch in our educational history is of supreme importance and dignity, no thoughtful mind doubts, but I believe that in no specialty will the consequences of a wise direction be more momentous to the ultimate prosperity, happiness and honor of our nation than in those lines that pertain to the development of its creative and appreciative esthetics.

However superficially the hurried youth of nations, for a time, prefers the allurements of business, war, science or self-amusement, it is the supreme testimony of history, philosophy, and even religion, that the destinies of past civilizations are decided not so much by body or brain as by the profounder emotional forces and sentiments of the soul — in short, by the ideality, poetry, imagination and sensibilities of the race. So that the famous exclamation of Fletcher, "Let me make the poems of a people, and I care not who makes its laws;" or the caution of the Christ to "Keep the heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life," come freighted with vast significance.

When all cruder activities and competitions have passed, the great art instincts and inspirations of every noble people have infallibly rescued its record from vulgarity or oblivion, and immortalized while consecrating the vital genius of the nation. So that we may safely say, not only of a man, but each fraction of mankind, "As it thinketh in its heart so veritably is it;" or in scientific phrases: According to its definite intellectual convictions relative to its emotional faculties, so assuredly must it measure in its standard of history and the finer competitions of actual civilization.

Art surveys her brilliant past, her growing present, and yet more glorious future, and scorning apologists, exclaims of her spirit of beauty: "The Creator Himself is her defence, and the God of Glory her rearward."

In the brief moments, therefore, accorded me, and before a professional audience, my remarks shall concern not the worth of art to our school system, but the worth of our present school systems and conceptions to *essential* art education — according as observations and professional experience for thirty years abroad and at home, compel my judgment.

Indeed, it seems to me, that once to state the question of "essential" art education, vitally and

fairly, would almost be to answer it. For the art of a nation (as you of course know) in deepest and truest significance, was never the vast accumulation of promiscuous borrowed plumes — as when Rome ravaged Greece for official pride and plunder (to the ruin of herself), but was ever and essentially that mysterious and magnificent evolution of esthetic principles and divine methods of self-manifestation employed by Nature in expressing her own poetry, and variously felt, comprehended and re-adapted by nations (as widely different as Greeks from Japanese) to express their own organic genius, their own inspirations, their own delights in nature and discoveries in her beauty. This was quickened and qualified, of course, by their own national inspirations, religious ideals, associated poetry, domestic industry and personal experience — which ever gives that unique flavor of *national character*, historic significance and local charm constituting genuinely organic “style.”

Now, this wonderful esthetic life that scintillates in every gem, unfolds from every shell, or bursts from every redolent flower, and is omnipresent to guide the oriole building his nest, the Polynesian carving his paddle-blade, the Pueblo weaving his mat, the Japanese silks, and covered Ganges, Euphrates, Nile and Rhine with miracles of national enthusiasm, was never the outcome of really borrowed or superficial culture, but flamed up from the fires of personal and national experience — as where of Dante's ode, the poet writes :

“From what stern agonies of heart and brain,  
What exultation — trampling on despair —  
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,  
What passionate victory of a soul in pain,  
Uprose this poem of the earth and sky,  
This medieval miracle of song!”

And you have only to consult the lives of such professional leaders as Phidias, Michael Angelo, Cellini, Palissy, Delacroix, Jean Francois Millet, to find how “essentially” this is true of all vital art work and workers.

Taine shows conclusively that far from art emanating as the product of servile imitation or speculative importation (much less senile decay), the great arts of all ages sprang as the quintessence or florescence of each people's heroism, as after Marathon in Greece, the new history of the Italian Republics, the victories of the Moors and expulsion of Spaniards from Holland. So that while data and devices are occasionally exchanged (as between neighbors), yet these were ever refired in the alembic of national life, and we are never interested,

nor is true art generated by plausible reproductions, but ever by what Goethe calls “reconquered principles” — freshly comprehended, re-assimilated, re-adapted to fresh, virile, organic conditions.

Now, I regret to say, that on all sides, among as eminent critics as John La Farge in the *July Century*, Charles DeKay in the *July Cosmopolitan*, and the *New York Tribune* articles on the Columbian Fair, exception is taken to our present art methods; that organic “American” art is not enough developed nor expressed, but mechanical and imitative systems intrude most injuriously into public and even professional schools, substituting sterile process for vital spark, veneer for reality, the borrowed credit of other days, ideas and personalities for the sincere *expression of ourselves*. The “tricks of trade,” the pride and surprise of performance or photographic process (bordering on brutality and bravado) for fine artistic faculties and sensibilities proper — for the subjective powers of originality, taste, ideality and native feeling. In short, that we are *too mimetic*, not *germinal*: begetting *monkeys*; not *men*. Now, I fear there is too much truth in their charges, backed so often by the ridicule of foreigners and the chidings of the best French, German and English artists themselves, for affecting their manners not divining their souls. The great Millet himself writing, “I am *never more classic than when true to myself*,” and another critic saying, “We foreigners like you for what is distinctly ‘*yours*,’ not second-hand ‘*ours*.’”

So that while some teachers blame the students for their superficiality, and others excuse themselves by claiming that “art cannot be taught, but technique can,” yet all of us are probably conscious that art instincts are enormously influenced for good or ill by educational conditions and ideals, and should be sympathetically befriended (by parental teachers not alien step-mothers) into wholesome consciousness and natural expansion, before the media of expression can take proper meaning. Just as we bring up our children into wholesome conditions of life with legitimate motives and desires before we expect of them perfection in speech and writing. These last are perfected into *personal* character by life-long practice, while the first are essential at the very start.

So that Blake's warning seems right: “Inappropriate execution is but nauseous foppery” — as language without inspiration or words without thought — and we are wisely reminded that feathers spring from birds, not birds from their feathers (much less from other birds' feathers that them-

selves change to climate). So that tons of imported obelisks and thousands of alien technicians or technicalities are not worth the self-respecting, self-consistent and harmonious development of national genius and taste, in sympathetic touch with universal nature and her universal principles of beauty.

I think we can say that an art system which does not cultivate artists *primarily* and technicians *secondarily*, is like the play of Hamlet without Hamlet, or Christianity without Christians—indeed (consciously or unconsciously), is the Pharisaicism which quenched the fires that alone sanctified the temple, for the “processes and profits of the temple hierarchy.”

Now, here it is interesting to note that the earlier poems of Burns, coming charged with the vitality of his highlands and redolent with the mountain flowers as with the color of his native dialect, were incomparably better poetry than his later labored and artificial English ones—just as the pith and point of Plato and Socrates were truer philosophy than the dialectics of the sophists. And old Japan, the most artistic people of earth (keenly divining the eternal principles back of beauty), deemed it so essential to be saturated with love of country and inspiration from their nature, that even to-day (when exposed to ruin and emasculation from foreign inroad) her art schools retain the traditions of sending out the children during recess to lie on their stomachs by the carp pools, there to memorize and reproduce on return fresh impressions of grace, form, color, setting, etc., before being taught historic methods of adapting these to specialties. This, at least, is starting “right end foremost,” and must be ever the directest, as it is the sincerest, method.

My appeal would, therefore, be for organic evolutionary processes in art, so akin to Froebel's principles in Kindergarten. The two should be united and homogeneous, proceeding from the native and national spirit to unfolded self-expression. That we should not at first divert our scholars from home to foreign gods, nor the dead forms of other days (no matter how good these were for those days), but rather protect freshness of inspiration (as a supreme desideratum), quicken not pervert spontaneity, stimulate new observation at new fountains of national power, develop personal faculties in selection, measure, arrangement, control, contrast, proportion, balance and harmony. Analysis and synthesis from nature's examples (delightful and superabundant here) till strong foundations are laid in fortified judgment, and personality

that must grow the wings of creative genius far better than the mechanically imitative and merely eclectic spirit. And this should be done before enslaving the faculties to specialty or loading them with the incubus of endless precedent—for so alone will later comparison profit (instead of falling, as so often, sterile upon servile and suppressed natures). With principle as a fulcrum and fearless genius as power, students will readily crack the nuts of antiquated tradition, or better far open up new nuggets of beauty and surprise in native soil—the poetry and history of their own hearts and hearthstones.

In closing, then, and specifically, as I find my children's home affection (when worth much to me or themselves) must spring from genuine natures, colored by temperament and needing encouragement without trammel (save from a few principles of home regimen or domestic facilities for affecting good intention) so we make our Institute for Artisans at New York, an art family not an art machine.

All, on entrance, obtain a bird's-eye view of the field before them, so far as consecutive steps of growth are concerned, and the natural sequence and relation of thought in different departments (from central root to varied branches, that leave the trunk gradually and keep in steady sympathy with the whole). For this we utilize much wall space for orderly examples (not foreign products but graduated development) of student faculties and unfolded principles which are accompanied by experiment, illustration, and reference to nature.

Metrical powers are early exercised, and the constant equations of number and measure so mysterious and universal are studied; for which every jointed reed, vine or skeleton leaf may become example.

Then point relations and line divergencies in structural angles and inner axes which constitute in space the abstract but essential framework of forms, and for which wire and glass, crystals, and even constructive models in cabinet ware and architecture help us.

Then optical effects are noted of implied motion, whether rectilinear, rhythmic, circular, spiral or radial. Geometric ratios are freely generated and played with for patterns (along the marvellous lines discovered by Japanese and Moors) to quicken student invention and show the endless fertilities of imagination.

After which prime forms, types and standards are investigated (with their derivatives) and espe-

cially with reference to inherent character and influence in combination.

Now the vast world of vegetable life is enlisted to aid us (so full of beauty in line and surface effect), and the principles of association revealed in serial and surface repetition, reflection, alternation, contrast, balance, etc., with laws of the mind in unity, variety, congruity, harmony, etc., with methods of progression in sequence, parallelism, tangency, revolution, expansion, etc., so closely allying art to life.

These foundations are secured by all for the sake of broad subsequent power, and to give time for special tendencies and aptitudes to disclose themselves, when they are gradually differentiated and pushed to maturity.

Even at this point the mind has capital enough to enter advantageously the departments of line and surface design in wrought and twisted metal, jewelry, textiles, wall surfaces and ceramics, till "low" and "high" relief is reached in clay decoration, casting and carving. Then, and in the subsequent more advanced sculpture, illustration, figure work and general painting, the realm of higher animal organism is enlisted, and fuller comprehension of aerial perspective, anatomy, light, color and costume is reached with subtler appreciation of posture, character, artistic selection and sentiment (viz., expression), till the world of technical process is fully introduced with the comparisons and special treatments of other lands and times.

## MODERN FRENCH PAINTING.

An Art Historical Study (unfinished).

The muse of painting of the middle ages existed solely for the glorification of one aim which was beyond and above her, whose demands she humbly obeyed, and for whose welfare she was somewhat responsible. Painting was nothing, the painter was nothing, religion everything.

With the dawn of the Renaissance, the muse of painting also awoke amidst the general turmoil and freed herself from the bondage which had originally given her life and prompted her ideas. She looked about her and at herself, and what joy did she not experience in discovering the extent of her own beauty, power and wealth; a desire rose within her to reveal all those faculties of which she had been unconscious until then. After painting for religion's sake followed painting for painting's sake.

A few centuries sufficed to render her tired of herself and then after painting for painting's sake, fol-

lowed painting for the painter's sake. Painting is once more a handmaid but of God no more. She serves any mortal who is strong enough to subjugate her.

Since the French Revolution painting has made an effort to express the language of the human soul.

To express personality, which can be recognized at the first glance, to form an individual sphere of forms and colors, in short, to paint the painter's soul with all its thoughts, desires and sentiments and idiosyncrasies is the intention and ambition of nineteenth century painting.

Her first representative in France was David, who painted his unlimited admiration for Napoleon.

Prudhon succeeded, a laughing giant of inexhaustible power, sprung from the race of Rubens, but modern, in as much as he was never satisfied with the accomplished, always greedy for something more powerful, novel in every new enterprise, one of those fortunates who can do all without laboring over it, yea, without even becoming conscious of what great masters they are.

The next step was taken by Géricault, a dark, violent, and yet dreamy nature, a forerunner to Delacroix, who represents individualism of color as Byron does the individualism of lyrical utterance. Delacroix's paintings are the confessions of an artist, who cannot forget Napoleon. His sorrow over the lost titan is like the famous first chapter of Musset's "Confessions," translated into painting, like Stendhal's "Julien Sorel" in colors. The despair over a generation grown up in fame and majesty, destined to spend its manhood in degeneration and shame, dreaming of warriors and obliged to pine away among grocers; the demand of the July revolution, the essence of which is after all, "I want a hero!"

All the other creations of that time, however ostentatiously they may parade themselves, have but little significance to the art historian. For painting, depending upon personality, must naturally become intolerable if practised by a mediocrity who has no claim to originality. To that category belonged the imitators of Ingres and Delaroche, and at present those of Bouguereau and Laurens. These masters themselves, as well as their affinities, Gerôme, Lefebvre, Delaunay, Gleyre, Hamon, etc., lack individuality. They, nevertheless, deserve their great reputation for they have been exceedingly industrious; they have learnt from all schools, whatever could possibly be acquired, and have always applied their knowledge with a refined and intellectual taste.

The majority of artists, however, were tired of